

Bobber Says, "IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE." Wear Your Life Jacket!

By: Mark Willis & Tadd Potter

Nearly every boy and girl loves a parade, and the same is true about golden retrievers – kids just can't keep their hands off of them. Put the two together, and you'll have the reason for a flurry of excitement as "Bobber the Water Safety Dog" took part in two Christmas Parades in the Nashville District.

The first parade was in Gordonsville, near Cordell Hull Lake, held on Saturday, December 1, 2007. Bobber's participation in the parade marks his first-ever appearance in any Nashville District activity or special event. Bobber - a relatively new Corps of Engineers "mascot" - was specifically designed to carry the message of water safety to youngsters of all ages.

Bobber's premier outing in the District came about after the staff of Cordell Hull Lake decided to enter a float in this year's local Christmas parade to promote water safety. Although the Gordonsville Christmas Parade is usually held in the daytime, this year a decision was made to hold it at night, instead. The result was one of the biggest Christmas parade turn-outs ever, with a crowd estimated at over 1,000 along the mile-and-a-half route.

"I thought it was fantastic," said Gordonsville Mayor Larry Bradford, speaking of the unprecedented turn-out for this year's "The Night of Lights" special nighttime parade.

In the Corps of Engineers float, Conservation Biologist Kenny Claywell wore the popular "Bobber" costume, and Park Rangers Stephen Gregory and Aurora Scott were also on hand to represent Cordell Hull Lake. During the parade, the Cordell Hull staff handed out bagfuls of water safety coloring books, crayons, and



stickers to eager youngsters along the route.

As for Bobber, he was clearly a hit amongst the younger crowd, whose eyes grew wide when they saw the big Water Safety Dog waving at them from inside the Corps of Engineers patrol boat. The kids waved back enthusiastically, and after the parade they took home the new "Bobber" coloring books that will remind them to always be safe, whenever around water.



Bobber and friends at the Gordonsville Parade

Just about a week later on December 9, 2007, Bobber did an encore performance at the Ashland City Christmas Parade, in the vicinity of Cheatham Lake.

During the mile-and-a-half route on Hwy. 12, Bobber was spreading

the ever so important message, "Wear your life jacket." This is the first year the staff of Cheatham Lake participated in the city's Christmas parade, and Bobber was more than well received. Kids went out of their way to make sure Bobber acknowledged them, and they were thrilled to catch a wave from the new Corps of Engineers mascot.

"Bobber was adorable" said Executive Assistant of Ashland City's Chamber of Commerce Stacy Luna. "I'm glad to see the Corps of Engineers participate in this year's

parade."

Conservation Biologist Tadd Potter wore the lovable "Bobber" costume while his daughter Allie, Environmental Protection Specialist Charlie Leath, and his wife Ani handed out water safety packets. These packets included items such as coloring books, crayons, pencils, key chains, and Frisbees. Kids of all ages raced to pick up the packets as they were tossed from the boat.

As for Bobber, he enjoyed spreading the water safety message during the holiday season to an estimated crowd of nearly 1,200 people.

Water safety is important during anytime of the year and because it is a wonderful life, we should always wear our life jackets.



Bobber Does an Encore at the Ashland City Parade